



Board of Trustees

Executive Committee

July 7, 2020

Minutes

Meeting held virtually via Zoom

In accordance with Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker's Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A, § 20 dated March 12, 2020.

A live stream of the meeting for public viewing also took place on YouTube.

MEMBERS PARTICIPATING REMOTELY: Committee Chair Queenin, Vice Chair Sullivan, and Secretary Martinez-Alvarez

MEMBERS EXCUSED: Trustee Hagan, past Chair

TRUSTEE GUESTS JOINING REMOTELY: Trustees Alvarado, Landrau (joined the meeting at 2:40 PM and left at 3:36 PM), Martin, and Williams

Chair Queenin called the meeting to order at 1:31 PM, and stated the meeting would be live streamed on YouTube. He introduced the Trustees participating, and stated that Mr. Gary Duggan, Director of Procurement and Administrative Services, was also participating in the meeting.

MOTION made by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, and seconded, to approve the minutes of the May 27, 2020 meeting.

ROLL CALL VOTE taken:

Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Chair Queenin turned the meeting over to Trustee Martin, chair of the Presidential Search Advisory Committee, who asked the Academic Search team to start their presentation.

Academic Search team members participating in the meeting were Dr. L. Jay Lemons, President and Senior Consultant, Dr. George Ross, Senior Consultant, and Mr. Shawn Hartman, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. Ms. Jennifer Kookan, Consultant, was not participating, but would be working on this search. Each gave a summary of their background and experience.

- History and Experience. Academic Search was born of former presidents who had the insight that former leaders could help institutions find leadership. The focus is exclusively on Higher Education and it has grown into something significant. They have performed more than 800 searches on the

presidential level since established, with 90%+ being successful and remaining in the position for five or more years, many staying between one and two decades.

- Recruitment. They provide professional development throughout the year for leadership development through their American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI) programs, nurturing existing leaders and supporting individuals in the pipeline for their next leadership positions. This gives access to the strongest candidates through connections made with the best leaders in Higher Education. Their database provides access to over 100,000 people working in Higher Ed. They will do the chasing and labor, creating a large network of both their and Westfield State's contacts. They will generate large mailings, but also target known contacts that have the knowledge and expertise required for Westfield's needs. Their personal contact with candidates is based on many years of activity and relationships that have been cultivated. They have recruited for the leadership of New England Commission on Higher Education and Massasoit and Quinsigamond Community Colleges in recent years. Mr. Hartman attended Westfield State University and has many contacts in Massachusetts.
- Process/Work with Search Committee. They believe in a team approach. Drs. Lemons and Ross will work side by side, providing two sets of experienced eyes and wisdom. A small group will be doing all the work. Their professional methodology is substance over superficiality. They will provide every completed application to the committee for transparency. The work and relationships built by members of the search committee are crucial to the launch of a new presidency as the committee members can help carry out the onboarding. The timeline the Board identified in June to expect an appointment by February or March next year can still be achievable in light of COVID, but the process needs to start soon. In order to honor shared governance and be sensitive in not asking the campus community to participate outside of the normal work rules, it may not be possible to do the pre-search assessment visit until fall, but there are enough points in the process to work on prior to that. The airport interviews are logistically challenging and time consuming for the candidates and institutions and a transition to Zoom interviews for first round interviews should be made. They closed five president searches in early June and had used different types of remote arrangements, giving them the time to build in additional conversations with campus communities.
- Diversity. They are highly committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and proud of the diversity in their own team and in the searches they conduct. It is a challenge to obtain gender balance in the pool of candidates. The Association of State Colleges and Universities' (AASCU) millennial leaders program raises up the underrepresented in leadership circles. Their access to this program through their leadership development programs is critical to helping them find ways to open the door to persons of color.
- Presidential Characteristics in Changing Times. There are greater demands on today's leaders than in any other time in our lifetime. Much of what makes great leaders transcends time and present issues. A president needs to be nimble, creative, innovative, inspiring, empathetic, caring, and resilient, with crisis management capabilities and understanding of new remote technological and educational opportunities. They need to be wholly integrated human beings with a capacity for integrity and ethical behavior and the ability to be strong communicators, establishing and building trusting relationships. You want to find someone who wants to do the presidency, not be the president, managing all stakeholders, faculty and staff balanced with student care.
- Other Searches and Conflicts. They typically conduct 100 searches per year, with 15 to 20 being presidential searches. The firm has a small number of presidential searches lined up for the coming year and Westfield State would be the first search for Drs. Lemons and Ross in the new fiscal year starting July 1. There are no conflicts that they are aware of. Westfield State is entering the cycle early, which is good. There has been less movement in leadership since March and no other AASCU-institution presidencies will be announced until fall.
- Most Successful Search. A recent search was one of their most successful, as they had made a commitment to do it right and then the world changed between the date of their assessment on

February 28, 2020 and the time of their profile. They advised the institution to keep moving. The pool was significant, and it was tough taking a three-figure pool to a manageable number. It is all about building the quality of the pool of candidates. With no personal touch on that campus, they have an experienced president coming on board after hitting every single calendar benchmark, even in the midst of a pandemic. In order to be the best advocates for Westfield State, they need to understand what the campus wants and needs and then help the search committee understand their responsibilities and how they need to work.

- Pricing. They offer a fixed pricing option with no administrative fees added in. Because AASCU is a beneficiary of the work they do, they try to provide a discount to AASCU member institutions.
- Knowledge of Westfield State University. They have read the Strategic Plan and it is a good framework. The student experience is a good place to start and they would like the opportunity to sell that.
- This process is a partnership built on trust. Westfield State has an incredible history. It is a truly important institution with its best days ahead. There is an outstanding leader who has the right qualities and they hope to be a part of helping Westfield find and discern who that is.

Chair Queenin invited anyone watching on YouTube to provide feedback on the interview by Friday. The Academic Search team left the meeting.

At 2:40 PM, WittKieffer team members joined the meeting and Trustee Martin introduced the Trustees (Trustee Landrau entered the meeting at 2:40 PM) and Mr. Duggan.

Ms. Lucy Leske, Senior Partner and Co-Chair of Diversity Council, Mr. Robert Luke, Consultant, and Ms. Christine Pendleton, Director of Community Fund and Co-Chair of Diversity Council, gave a summary of their background and experience.

- History and Experience. Among the three team members, they have as much, if not more, experience than others, with 65 searches including a broad range of institutions throughout New England so they can talk about the region with much enthusiasm. WittKieffer has been at the forefront of best practices since started. They work in partnership with clients on how to execute each search and tailor processes to meet the client's needs, even during COVID. That is not new to them; they have always looked at the needs in relationship to the action completed, engaging new ways of making it work.
- Recruitment. In recruiting, they search very broadly for candidates, looking at the 1.3 million names in their database and with local foundations by a dedicated researcher. They will make direct outreach to candidates and to other people who could nominate a candidate. They have built networks with relationships cultivated over decades through consultants spread all over the country, and have knowledge of many public university presidents. It may not be a current president who has the talent and skill needed. Research and strategy also explores candidates in the tier below the presidency, such as provosts, chiefs of staff, deans, and financial vice presidents. They have wonderful relationships with system heads across the country.
- Process/Work with Search Committee. To have a successful search, you need to look at the successes and challenges of Westfield State, taking into consideration the importance of shared governance and union participation being critical. Tap into the greatest resources and talent in the institution right now. Use technology to make this search more successful and meaningful. Instead of one or two days of meetings with stakeholders, hold Zoom intake meetings with students and faculty over several days ensuring all voices are heard, being mindful of union contracts' provisions on the availability of members. Also create a survey for people to give valuable feedback so that all people on campus can access and participate in the process. They would then take what is provided and distill and assimilate the information back to campus. WittKieffer's Startup Guide will propel the search team in getting organized and will help them understand the Massachusetts Board of

Higher Education guidelines and the need to be flexible in these uncertain times. Using technology, search committee meetings can be shorter, happen more often, and include more people, which builds community and communication with the committee. If faculty cannot be included in the initial meetings with stakeholders due to contracts, surveys are a good way to hear their voice. Advertising and press releases can be prepared and ready to launch. It is important to get the first steps right with engagement so the community feels shared appreciation and criteria going forward.

- Diversity. Their placement rate in terms of diversity is unique and they are very proud of recent diverse placements. At no time in history have they been more excited to make a difference in this area. They encouraged the Board to think about what diversity means to Westfield and how it is defined. By agreeing what a diverse pool would look like at the beginning, the firm is clear on what to look for in the right networks. The diversity language used at Westfield State will be used in the profile and discussions with candidates. The firm would work with the committee carefully to determine words, processes, and communications that may turn someone off unintentionally. It is important to inform candidates of what Westfield State offers. Begin thinking of what assets the university has to attract and support candidates and how they would view themselves and their family fitting in.
- Presidential Characteristics in Changing Times. In August they will facilitate a meeting of sitting presidents to discuss how the global pandemic will affect presidents in Higher Ed. There was considerable outreach to determine what should be discussed. A common skill set for executives is maintaining or working with set resources and activities to move an agenda forward. Currently, the variables are changing every day, causing weariness, fear, and a tendency to regress. Now is not the time to play it safe but rather to double down on strategy and engage the entire community in conversation since all assumptions made in January are now significantly different. The president will need to keep the entire team calm with courage and stamina to work together.
- Other Searches and Conflicts. Their firm handles a few hundred searches a year with a large presence in Higher Ed across the country. Ms. Leske currently has one other search which was launched two months ago. In a typical year, the most searches she would be leading is three or four at any one time. Mr. Luke currently has no others and Ms. Pendleton has one other ongoing search. Considering conflicts with comparable institutions would require a definition of what Westfield State considers a conflict. Talking with more people for two different searches gives access to a much more diverse pool.
- Most Successful Search. They take pride in all their placements and each one is successful for different reasons. A successful search is when progress has been made in strategic actions on campus three-to-five years after placement. They are really proud of the people they engage in conversations to be potential candidates. Ms. Leske gave some examples of recent successful searches.
- Massachusetts Public Higher Education. Ms. Leske is proud to be a citizen of Massachusetts with the Governor's leadership during the COVID pandemic. Although Massachusetts has not been as generous to Higher Ed as other states, it does value education deeply as a resource and asset. People see Massachusetts as a strong place to go and serve; relationships with unions have been a little more stable; and having the funding agencies for capital construction is a plus. They have an understanding of the BHE guidelines so can work with integrity and transparency, being inclusive and organized.
- Pricing. The only things added to the fee are advertising and travel costs and the cost of the leadership assessment if desired.
- Knowledge of Westfield State University. They understand fundraising will be a major priority for the next president and that the senior management team has been hired in the last two-to-four years. Greater collaboration among college systems could always improve moving forward.

- The WittKieffer team is very excited to be considered for this search and to work in the western part of the state. They are struck by Westfield being the most residential of the public institutions with the most students proportionately and in being the first teacher school in United States with no barriers to entry.

Trustee Martin invited anyone watching on YouTube to provide feedback on the interview by Friday. The WittKieffer team and Trustee Landrau left the meeting at 3:36 PM.

At 3:50 PM, Isaacson, Miller team members joined the meeting and Trustee Martin introduced the Trustees and Mr. Duggan.

Partners Kate Barry and Rebecca Kennedy gave a summary of their background and experience.

- History and Experience. The firm would be glad to serve Westfield State again, having completed searches here in the last few years (college deans and vice president of Student Affairs). A search coordinator will play a critical role and lift the administrative burden from Westfield State staff. Reference and research specialists will also be part of the team. They have 200 employees in their Boston headquarters with offices across the country. They perform 350 searches per year, with 70% in Higher Ed. They are the nation's largest and most diverse executive search firm with 75% to 80% repeat searches. They follow people's careers for a long time.
- Recruitment. Once the firm has worked with the Board, search committee and campus community to define opportunities, challenges, and attributes being sought, they will start the process of locating candidates. They will look for nominations from the Board, campus and community members to bring the broadest number of candidates. The firm will deliberate on profiles and share curricula vitae, creating a partnership between the firm and committee. The committee can choose to see as much or as little as wanted. One thing they would do differently from their recent prior searches at Westfield is to make sure all constituent groups are involved at the beginning, making sure that there is over-communication with the search committee on expectations for both. Most critical for the search committee is a mid-course check in when networking has been started. Halfway through the networking effort, the committee sees the possible candidates so far and can look at what excites them. It is not narrowing down, but learning which candidates generate the most interest. It is good team building and a definite time commitment for the search committee, but they need to get to a point to trust each other to have some differences of opinion. The search firm will then return in five weeks with lists of candidates.
- Process/Work with Search Committee. Their process consists of three stages:
 - Definitional stage consisting of listening sessions. They work with the campus community, the state, and the Board to understand challenges to educate the search firm in representing us in the market and to get a participatory process started with shared governance through community engagement.
 - Candidate discovery to see what motivates candidates and their interest in Westfield State.
 - Selection process of learning more about fewer people through an extensive referencing process, a distinguishing asset of the firm.

Knowledge of how Westfield State works in the community will assist them to market how public regional comprehensive universities can play a part in the community. Westfield has made great progress with public schools in Springfield, Holyoke and Westfield. A successful search starts with a mutual understanding of the priorities for a president developed by the search committee, the Board and the search firm. This is where the definition stage and position profiles would be created. To build a diverse pool, there needs to be conversations so there will be no narrow parameters in networking. The search committee needs to be educated on how to set parameters. Make sure due diligence is done on finalists to get a 360-degree view of what and how they accomplished things. It is essential to be clear among the Board, committee, search firm, and the

campus community on how the process will play out. When developing the definitional stage during the pandemic, involve the broader community through multiple group Zoom forums for faculty senate, students, and staff. Creating surveys for people to fill out either anonymously or attributably would be helpful as well.

- Diversity. The value placed on diversity and inclusion is significant at Westfield State and there needs to be certain there is a diverse pool in many different ways by starting with honest and robust conversations with the search committee. Make sure there is transparency and inclusiveness on all facets of campus. In addition to their database, their network is broad and diverse. Their comprehensive search will look at institutions recognized for leadership areas, both nationally and internationally. Their relationships with professional organizations give them many sources of diverse candidates.
- Presidential Characteristics in Changing Times. Through their current searches, they have seen how boards and current presidents are dealing with the challenges and costs associated with the pandemic. The ability to be flexible and nimble is more necessary now. Some innovative leaders took healthy risks to survive and thrive during the 2008-2009 economic crash, looking out past their immediate situation. Those are the leaders to be looking for.
- Other Searches and Conflicts. They average five searches at a time with six-to-eight presidential searches per year. Each search has a group of partners, an associate, and reference and research specialists. Ms. Kennedy is currently finishing up five-to-six active searches and Ms. Barry has three-to-four current searches, tending to have a larger presidential practice with fewer at a time and bigger teams. Regarding concurrent searches at comparable institutions, Ms. Kennedy has none and Ms. Barry has one private liberal arts college with little overlap. Once needs are determined, there is not much overlap between candidates.
- Most Successful Search. They have firm-wide celebrations on all successes. Still very proud of placing the Associate Vice President for Title IX and Civil Rights for Michigan State University when extensive community relations understanding in sensitive areas was needed. They helped the institution get to a better place, supported them through it, and performed very well under difficult situations. Another challenging search was for Hobart and Williams Smith Colleges where they came in after nine months of the prior president's term. The campus community was hurting with distrust and stress, and the firm had to build trust first.
- Massachusetts Public Higher Education. Each state university comes with particular areas of specialties and Westfield is known for community engagement and programs. Westfield's admissions and history are positives to present. Massachusetts Public Higher Ed has financial challenges but a selling point for Westfield is that it is doing well. The challenges are the shrinking demographics of enrolling students and post-COVID economics of the state. Higher Ed funding is a challenge at all public comprehensive institutions so all candidates will have seen and understand those challenges. The salary will eliminate some candidates, but that is not unique to Westfield.
- Knowledge of Westfield State University. Westfield's founding principal jumped out as a critical part of the pitch, together with diversity and equity over centuries. The restructuring of academic affairs, growing pains, leadership challenges and controversies are wounds that can be reopened with a fear for repeat. They would be prepared to help faculty and staff through anxiety related to these, especially in a global pandemic.
- They are thrilled to have been asked for a proposal and would be honored to work with Westfield again on this leadership search.

Trustee Martin invited anyone watching on YouTube to provide feedback on the interview by Friday. The Isaacson, Miller team left the meeting.

The next Executive Committee meeting will be on July 14, 2020 at 1:00 PM.

There being no further business, **MOTION** made by Trustee Sullivan, seconded by Trustee Martinez-Alvarez, to adjourn.

ROLL CALL VOTE taken:

Trustee Queenin	Yes
Trustee Sullivan	Yes
Trustee Martinez-Alvarez	Yes

Motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 4:56 PM.

Attachments presented at this meeting:

- a. Draft Minutes of May 27, 2020
- b. Academic Search Proposal
- c. WittKieffer Proposal
- d. WittKieffer Startup Guide
- e. Isaacson, Miller Proposal